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PSCI 191.01: Global Public Health - Insights from Experience

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ISSUES IN GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH: A GLI Freshman Seminar
(PSCI 191; 3 credits) Spring 2012

Professor Peter Koehn, Department of Political Science
Office hours: MW 2-4 and by appointment (LA 348)

Course Objectives

To function as informed and active citizens in a world suffused by proximate, distant, and transnational health challenges, students are advantaged by developing awareness and sensitivities regarding public-health issues of global concern. The seminar is designed to engage as well as inform. The overarching seminar question will be: "What transnational, national, and local policies and skills will help us address current and future challenges to global health?" By confronting big and enduring questions of global health in your first year, you will become aware of rewarding opportunities to focus your baccalaureate education, to prepare for professional careers, and to carry out one's personal responsibility as a concerned citizen. The academic foundation for this proposal is the Institute of Medicine's 2003 recognition that public-health literacy is an "essential part of the training of citizens" and that it "prepares students to contribute to the health of the public through positive decision-making and constructive action in personal professional and civic arenas." The instructor's scholarly work on the value of transnational competence for health-care professionals will provide the basis for building skills intended to enable you to participate creatively and effectively when global health challenges arise in the future.

Seminar Description

While exploring big and enduring issues of global public health, we will focus on "finding the right questions." In the process, you will be introduced to diverse perspectives and approaches, constraints and capacities, ethical dilemmas, policy options, and challenges involved in making decisions under conditions of uncertainty. You are encouraged to make and explore interdisciplinary as well as transnational connections.

The seminar treats current public-health challenges in industrialized and low-income countries, including chronic and infectious illnesses. Big and enduring issues covered include the impact of social and political inequities on the global burden of illness, health impacts of climate change, undernourishment and malnutrition, sanitation and access to clean water, the obesity epidemic, funding disparities, the "fatal flow of expertise" from low-income to wealthy countries, transnational and indigenous health care (including medical tourism), health as a human right and development resource, health implications of displacement, migration, travel, and migrant health care, remote (rural) and reservation health challenges, armed conflict and health, public-disaster and health-emergency preparedness and response, quarantines and isolation, and academic preparation for emerging transnational challenges. In comparative perspective, the course explores the individual, environmental, resource, and governance (national, international, and non-governmental) context of public-health policy, interventions, and outcomes and addresses questions of health equity and justice, regional problematics and contributors, and the concerns of vulnerable populations along with possibilities for health advocacy. Through individual and group research and service-learning projects, you will prepare to work collaboratively with future partners.

Learning Outcomes

The seminar focuses on skill learning consistent with the transnational-competence framework. You are expected to distinguish and develop analytic, emotional, creative, communicative, and functional competencies. You will learn to frame questions about global public-health challenges, analyze underlying contributing factors, resolve ethical dilemmas, construct transdisciplinary approaches working in teams, and critically assess implementation strategies and policy alternatives. Specific learning outcomes include:

- Demonstrate understanding of the history, principles, and burdens of public health in a global context
- Demonstrate ability to discern interconnections among local and transnational, upstream and midstream, forces that facilitate and constrain global health
- Demonstrate ability to identify and distinguish the multiple and transnationally interconnected social, political, economic, environmental, cultural, biological, and behavioral determinants of individual and population health
- Demonstrate ability to compare health conditions in the Global South with health conditions in the USA (including remote rural areas and Native American reservations) and awareness of factors that contribute to health vulnerabilities and wide disparities in health opportunity
- Demonstrate ability to analyze the effects on public-health systems of politics and social/economic policies at the local, tribal, state/provincial, national, and international levels
- Demonstrate appreciation for the role of individual capabilities and resilience, contextual resources, community collaboration, and transnational partnership in promoting public health
- Demonstrate ability to identify and critically assess cost-effective approaches aimed at reducing health disparities now and for generations to follow
- Demonstrate ability to identify health-promoting individual lifestyle behaviors and socially responsible local and transnational participation in promoting public health

Learning Methods

The seminar integrates multiple and multidisciplinary learning methods. The emphasis is on student-centered learning. Reading assignments present controversies in transnational perspective and ethical dilemmas.

Group Discussion and Facilitation

Most classes will be conducted using the group-discussion approach. Based on assigned reading that includes work by medical anthropologists, climate-change scholars, public-health specialists, political scientists focused on health policy and transnational governance, physicians, analysts of transnational migration, and others, each of you will serve as a discussion facilitator on an enduring and/or arising issue of global public health (by providing a critical summary of assigned readings and leading small-group discussion centered around one big question raised by the instructor and one big question of your own construction).

Debate

Each student will participate in an in-class debate on a controversial issue in global public health. Working in teams, you will argue for the "pro" or the "con" side of the issue under consideration. Course material as well as additional research findings should be creatively employed to support your team's position.

Final Paper/Project

The final paper should be based on applied problem-focused research that addresses a practical transnational public-health challenge or should present deep reflection on a service-learning project that promotes public health through socially responsible participation. Engagement in service-learning projects related to public health would offer a powerful complementary learning experience. The instructor will provide guidance in the identification of topics, approaches, and methods for research and service-learning projects.

Initiative-sustaining Plan

By the conclusion of the course, each student will design and submit an initiative-sustaining, life-long-learning/action plan. Your sustainability plan might involve overseas internship and study-abroad conceptualization, envisioning a future joint undergraduate student/faculty research project, proposing a community-health-promotion campaign, and/or a plan for "scaffolding" service-learning projects throughout one's baccalaureate experience.

Assessment

In-class discussions 30%
Mid-term essay exam 20%
Debate 10%
Individual initiative-sustaining plan 10%
Final paper/project 30%

Required Texts

Steven Johnson, *The Ghost Map* (2006)
Abraham Verghese, *Cutting for Stone* (2009)
All other reading are on electronic reserve (password = psci191)

Weekly Schedule and Assignments

(assigned readings should be completed by the date listed)

January 25: Introduction to the Seminar

February 1: Introduction to Public Health

Assignment: Johnson, *The Ghost Map*, pp. 1-228

Optional: RadioLab podcast: Patient Zero www.radiolab.org/2011/nov/14/ Click on "listen" to open media player or download podcast to your ipod

2-page ungraded essay due

Information literacy workshop with Megan Stark

February 8: Global Health: Why Should We Be Concerned?

Assignment: (1) Global Health Education Consortium, "Global Health: The Basics" (2006).

Go to www.globalhealth-ec.org Find "global health teaching modules." Click "sample modules." Click Module 20 "presentation."

(2) Kidder, *Mountains beyond Mountains* (2003), pp. 76-95; 104-113

(3) Pisani, *Wisdom of Whores: Bureaucrats, Brothels, and the Business of AIDS*, pp. 1-12, 124-60

In class film: Contagion DVD 05335 (106 minutes)

February 15: Infections in a Borderless World

Assignment: (1) Garrett, "Yambuku," *The Coming Plague* (1994)

(2) Walsh, "Virus Hunter" (2011)

(3) Johnson, *The Ghost Map*, pp. 231-256

(4) Dr. Oz, "When Panic Goes Viral" (2011)

(5) WHO & H. Kelly, "Is the International Community Adequately Prepared to Address Global Health Pandemics?" (2012)

February 22: Health & Migration; Transnational Competence and Global Public Health

Assignment: (1) Koehn, "Global Health and Human Rights: Challenges for Public Health Administrators in an Era of Interdependence and Mobility" (2007)

(2) Koehn, *Transnational Competence* (2010), pp. 94-108

(3) Tiilikainen and Koehn, "Transforming the Boundaries of Health Care: Insights from Somali Migrants." (2011)

February 29: Responses to Global Public Health Crises: Quarantine, Isolation, Closures

Assignment: (1) Jane S. Smith, "The Personal Predicament of Public Health" (2003)

(2) Zuger, "Isolation, an Ancient & Lonely Practice, Endures" (2010)

March 7: Provider-recipient Interactions I: The Global North

Assignment: Verghese, *Cutting for Stone* (entire read by now)

In-class film: Sicko DVD 02488 (123 minutes)

Communicating Effectively Through an Interpreter DVD (28 minutes)

March 14: Global Governance & Public Health Challenges

Assignment: (1) Visit web sites of WHO, MSF, UNHCR, Gates Foundation

(2) Matthew Bishop and Michael Green, "Billanthropy: Good or Bad?" (2009)

(3) McNeil, "Pharmaceutical Giant to Give \$5.7 Million Toward Health Programs in Poor Countries" (2011)

(4) Altman, "How Tiny Errors in Africa Led to a Global Triumph" (2011)

(5) Klapper & Riley, "Haiti Lessons: A Corps for Doctors" (2010)

March 21: Mid-term exam

March 28: Chronic Illness, Disabilities, & Mental Health in Global Perspective

Assignment: (1) Yach & Beaglehole, "Globalization of Risks for Chronic Diseases Demands Global Solutions" (2004)

(2) "Americans with Disabilities Applaud President Obama's Intention to Sign Convention '09

(3) Koehn, "Mental Health and Migration" (2012)

(4) UN General Assembly Sept. 2011 Summit on Chronic Illness, "NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES DEEMED DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE OF 'EPIDEMIC PROPORTIONS'

(5) Lothe, "A Study of Resilience in Young Ethiopian Famine Survivors" (2003)

April 4: Spring break

April 11: The "Fatal Flow of Expertise"

Assignment: (1) J. Dwyer, "What's Wrong with the Global Migration of Health Care Professionals?" '07

Writing workshop with Kelly Webster

April 18: Transnational Collaboration

Assignment: (1) Kimani, "Better Health at the Click of a Button" (2008)

(2) Zuger, "Folding Saris to Filter Cholera-contaminated Water" (2011)

(3) Fuller, "Volunteers Forge Better Care in Thailand's Villages" (2011)

(4) McNeil, "Brewing Up Double-edged Delicacies for Mosquitoes" (2011)

(5) Hoffman, "Lifestraw Saves Those Without Access to Clean Drinking Water" (2011)

Review paper/projects

April 25: Provider-recipient Interactions II: The Global South

Assignment: Review Verghese, *Cutting for Stone*

In-class film: Triage: Dr. James Orbinski's Humanitarian Dilemma (DVD 04958; 88 minutes)

May 2: Connecting Global Health & Other "Big Issues": Armed Conflict, Climate Change, Development

Assignment: (1) Schuller, "Three Capitals: A Framework," pp. 12-21 (2004)

(2) Koehn, *Transnational Competence* (2010), pp. 22-43

(3) Harding and Libal, "War and the Public Health Disaster in Iraq" (2010)

(4) Koehn, "Back to the Future: Bicycles, Human Health, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions in China" (2007)

(5) WHO, Commission on Social Determinants of Health, *Closing the Gap in One Generation* (2008), pp. 1-2.

(6) Bradley and Taylor, "To Fix Health, Help the Poor" (2011)

May 9: Final Paper/Project Presentations

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